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PP RUEHCHI
DE RUEHVN #0227 1020612
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P 110612Z APR 08
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1959
INFO RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY 7665
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 0631
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0630

UNCLAS VIENTIANE 000227

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/MLS (BESTIC);
BANGKOK FOR POL (SUTTON);
BANGKOK FOR REFCOORD (SCHERER);
DEPT FOR PRM/ENA;
DEPT FOR PRM/ADM;
GENEVA FOR RMA;
PACOM FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: LA PHUM PREF PREL TH

SUBJECT: REPATRIATION OF 67 HMONG FROM THAILAND

REF: A. BANGKOK 1151
 1B. VIENTIANE 0225

(SBU) MFA Director General for Press Affairs Yong Chanthalangsy confirmed press reports that Thailand had repatriated 19 families of Lao Hmong (67 individuals) from Thailand's detention facility in Petchabun Province. According to Yong the 67 had arrived on April 10 and had been sent to the Lao screening facility at Paksan where they are expected to remain for "less than a month." Yong said he expected that 80% of this group had come from Xiang Khouang Province and would be returned there after screening for resettlement with extended family members. Asked about returning them at this time -- just before the April 13 Lao (and Thai) traditional New Year -- Yong said that, with 8000 to be repatriated from Thailand, the process, although starting slowly, has to move forward. Yong said that the Pak San screening personnel had been instructed to work through the New Year holiday to complete screening. (Note: the return was highlighted as a front-page story in three major Lao newspapers on April 11; this group does not include the Lao Hmong waiting to be repatriated from Petchabun to Laos to be subsequently resettled to France (ref B).)

HUSO